

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 13, 2014

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The Honorable Tom Wheeler  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

I am writing in regard to the recent tragedy that occurred along Interstate 81 near the border between Maryland and Pennsylvania. This event highlights the continued need to address concerns about coverage and reliability of the telecommunication system in rural areas.

Reports state that in the early morning hours of January 4, 2014, a driver called 911 on his cell phone while driving north on Interstate 81 near the Maryland and Pennsylvania border. While in Maryland the driver reported a truck was chasing him up the highway while shooting at him. Unfortunately, it was reported that the phone call was dropped as he crossed into Pennsylvania, forcing the individual to make a second call to 911 dispatchers. When the police arrived on the scene, they found the vehicle forced off the road and the young man shot several times. Tragically, the man later died from his injuries.

I respectfully ask that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) investigate this heartbreaking incident and study how we can improve mobile telecommunication services in rural areas. While I understand the FCC is aware of the concerns that rural communities face when dealing with dropped calls or poor quality services, I believe a renewed effort must be made to drastically improve these services. I also ask that your office take a particular look at how emergency services and responses are being affected by poor quality phone service.

Phone services are vital to rural communities and we must ensure we are striving to expand new and updated technologies to all Americans regardless of where they live. I appreciate your attention to this matter, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

April 11, 2014

The Honorable Bob Casey  
United States Senate  
393 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Casey:

Thank you for your letter requesting that the Commission investigate the 9-1-1 mobile telephone call made by Mr. Timothy Davison on January 4, 2014, while he traveled from Maryland into Pennsylvania on Interstate 81. In your letter, you also asked that we study how to improve mobile telecommunication services in rural areas. As your letter requested, I asked Commission staff to review this incident.

Mr. Davison's tragic death is under police investigation, so the staff's review was limited by the availability of information in the public record. Nevertheless, the wireless carriers serving that area and public safety communications officials – from Washington County, Maryland, Franklin County, Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania State Police – spoke with staff and provided excellent support for the staff review.

Public records indicate that the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) in Washington County, Maryland, answered Mr. Davison's initial call around 2:00 a.m. on January 4, 2014. The call terminated for unknown reasons after a few minutes. The Washington County PSAP attempted several times to reconnect with Mr. Davison, but was unsuccessful. Around 2:05 a.m., Mr. Davison made another 9-1-1 call that was answered by the PSAP in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. The Franklin County PSAP quickly transferred the call to the Pennsylvania State Police, which held an open line with Mr. Davison until communications on that line ceased a few minutes later.

The staff's analysis indicates that multiple wireless service providers cover the area in which this tragic incident occurred. Unfortunately, the available records do not provide us with sufficient information for us to reach a conclusion as to why Mr. Davison's initial call to the Washington County PSAP terminated.

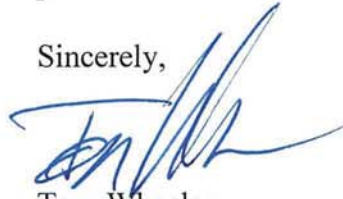
Regarding your questions about coverage in rural areas, the Commission has taken important steps to increase mobile coverage in rural areas. As of October 2012, 99.3 percent of the total rural U.S. population and 92.6 percent of total rural U.S. road miles had mobile voice service coverage from one or more providers. To address areas with limited mobile coverage, the Commission established a universal service support mechanism dedicated exclusively to mobile services. Specifically, the Commission set aside \$300 million in one-time support to

accelerate immediate deployment of networks for mobile voice and broadband services in unserved, largely rural areas. This support was made available through a nationwide reverse auction, which took place in the fall of 2012. There were 33 winning bidders, extending broadband coverage up to 83,494 road miles in geographic areas located in 31 states and one territory.

In addition, as part of the Commission's service rules, mobile service providers must comply with band specific build-out obligations. These providers must meet build-out obligations in specific timeframes and notify the Commission when they meet their obligations. These build-out obligations help facilitate the provision of mobile service to all Americans.

Thank you again for bringing these matters to my attention. I look forward to working closely with you and other Members of Congress to promote further mobile deployment.,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Wheeler', with a stylized, flowing script.

Tom Wheeler